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1913
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The Mystic Hour and Other Poems

By
Albert R. Fiske

The Mystic Hour

and Other Poems

"FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER"

DEDICATED TO THE

Elks

BY

ALBERT R. FISKE

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THE MYSTIC HOUR

I

HE Mystic Hour! it comes with shadows of the night,
When all the earth's asleep and day has taken flight.
When wheels of commerce cease to grind, and hearts are still,
Then comes the Hour, the holy Hour, that spells Good-Will!

One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—
Eight—nine—ten—and now—Eleven.
The heavy notes peal out on the night's chill air,
And forth to Heaven goes our silent, tend'rest prayer.

However far removed we are, where'er our home,
Wherever we may be, wherever we may roam,
When this Hour falls on dial of Time, 'tis then we feel
The swelling, throbbing Heart, and then it is we kneel
At Memory's shrine, and share with one another
Our grief, for him—Our Departed Brother.

Tho' not a man of wealth perhaps, or known to fame,
Still he was one of us, and we inscribe his name
On bronze, but better yet his name we always write
On tablets of the heart, when Eleven comes at night.

His faults we write on sands that Time will wash away,
His Virtues Memory writes on tablets not of clay,
On Souls that love, forgive, exalt the Good,—
A sacred Principle of our Brotherhood!

II

KNOW they say that Love is dead,
And man lives but for place and gold,
That Life's a fight for daily bread,
And Friendship can be bought and sold;
I know they say that one's best friend
Wherever he may roam or be,
Is this, the Dollar, to which bend
The strongest in humility.

I know the Dollar's sway and power,—
But too, I know the ties of Brotherhood!
I know how sacred is this Hour,
The Mystic Hour, that brings a mighty flood
Of Memories, and binds us all together
With magic cords, in true Fraternity!—
The cords ethereal are as ether,
But strong as steel, and span Eternity!

III

T'S the Hour of Eleven, Boys!
The clock is striking in the tower.
It's the Hour of Eleven, Boys!
We feel its strange and magic power.
Voices still, let words be few,
And lift the thought in a solemn toast.
Brothers, cold in death, of you
We think who've joined the silent host.
Far away, in any clime,
With ourselves, or others,
This our toast, yes ev'ry time,
"To Our Departed Brothers!"

Gone from our mortal sight,
No more to know our joy and mirth,
Still we keep your Memory bright,
Review your deeds, record your worth.

'Tis the Hour for retrospection,
The Mystic Hour of Eleven.
'Tis the Hour of recollection
When hearts leap up to Heaven.
It's the Hour of Eleven, Boys!
It falls on the dial of Time.
It's the Hour of Eleven, Boys!
We hear the bell, the solemn chime.
It's the Hour of Eleven, Boys!
We stand in silence, bow the head.
It's the Hour of Eleven, Boys!
When Memory communes with th' Dead.

FRATERNITY

RATERNITY! thou art the golden cord
That binds us all together! steel nor sword
Can cut the tie; not e'en when life departs,
For magic is the pow'r which binds our hearts!
Ethereal and Mystical it is, and still
It dominates and rules o'er heart and will,
And makes us better men, while from Above
There comes the holy baptism of Love.
Fraternity! it means that hands clasp hands,
And he who's in the circle Understands!

HELLO BILL!

MET him in the crowded city street,
Where men may pass and yet may never meet,
Where ev'ry one is busy on his way,
And seldom stops to pass the time of day;
I met him,—my name he never knew,
And yet he stopped me, asked "How'd ye do?"
Said, "Hello Bill! it's sure a splendid day."
And shook my hand in a genuine sort of way.
I knew I'd never seen that chap before,
And yet the pins which on our coats we wore
Were just alike, and so we both could speak,
As though we'd known each other least a week!

He knew that I was quite a way's from home,
I guess, that from the country I had come,
For he enquired, "How's the folks?" and seemed
Real interested, while his features beamed
With smiles, as though an old time friend he'd found.
He asked, "Would you like to be shown around?"

Now, what d'ye think of that!—to meet him on the street
And have him stop—a man you never saw—and greet
You with a smile and genuine good-will,
And shake your hand, and say, "Hello Bill!"
What do you think of that! can't you surmise
That this to me was quite a big surprise?

There is no place where one feels quite so small,
So truly insignificant and all,
As in the city with its crowded street,
Where seldom do we know the folks we meet,
And where a man is but an atom, feels
His littleness, is but a spoke in the wheels
That go around and round, that make of life
A constant grind, a struggle and a strife.
Now, when you're being jostled in the throng
Is it not fine to feel that you belong
To those who think of you, exalt Good-Will?—
Who say where'er they meet, "Hello Bill!"

THE CHARITY FUND

OME on, Boys! it's the Social Session.
A very pardonable digression
It surely doth appear.
For not one of us has ever shunned
The raising of the Charity Fund,
Which comes just once a year.

You all are willing to give, if we ask it,
The money to fill the Christmas basket,
For you've done it before.
Then, if we ask a song or dance or speech,
Or that you whistle, or that you preach,
Or act the fool on the floor,—
Why, do it nicely, but stand in line
Just the same to pay your fine,
We'll make it as big as we can.
For Tommy and Johnny and Jimmy and Dick
Must have their share of the big drum stick,—
Then, pay your money like a man!

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD

(From "A Christmas Reverie")

ANDS clasping hands and hands across the sea,
We're getting together, the Greek, the Slav, the Free.
Men of all races and men of all clans,
One interest is ours and that is Man's!
This is our hope and the thing we await,
The coming of Peace and the passing of Hate.
Flesh of one flesh and blood of one blood,
The nations all in a Brotherhood!
* * * I bring the world its greatest good,
The Love of Christ and Brotherhood!
I see them wedded with Reason!
The day of Peace! the day of Peace!
When war among the clans shall cease,
And all the world shall know the Way.
When men no longer will complain
Of hate and greed, for Christ shall reign!
'Tis coming! coming! the better day.

THE FAULTS OF OUR BROTHERS

OWEVER good we are, and too, however bad,
A fact it is, we haven't wings!
We talk sometimes though, some of us, as if we had,—
Were fit to wear the crown of Kings!

The "holier than thou" aspect, 'tis the attitude
Toward men of the Pharisee,
Who thought that he, only he, was embued
With Truth, or Saint of God might be.

This egotism, this narrow way of viewing life,
Is still abroad, is in the land;
And always you can find the man who'd thrust a knife
Straight to the heart with cruel hand.

It might be justified to speak unkind of others
If one of us were really good!
But all are weak and erring,—too we're Brothers,
And this itself means Brotherhood!

Let him without a sin or blemish cast the stone,

But look to your own house of glass!
For you and I are both too human, and have done
Some things beneath us, alas!

The Saints, 'tis safe to say, don't live these days, are dead,
And none of us deserve their fame,
For ordinary men we are, when all is said,
With passions, weaknesses the same!

Then, let us try to do our best, be what we ought,
And tend most strictly at home,
And mind our own affairs, for there are battles to be fought
Right here that ev'ry day will come.

The faults of our Brothers! these we'll write
On the sands, for Time to wash away;
The memory of their Virtues we'll keep ever bright
For this we know is the Christian way.

* * *

However good we are, and too, however bad,
A fact it is, we haven't wings!

SWEET CHARITY

WEET Charity! she comes from Heav'n
To dwell with men upon the earth,
To bless the world with joy and light
And turn its sorrow into mirth.
She comes to melt the sordid heart,
Inspire the gracious, kindly deed.
She whispers Love and Brotherhood,
Humanity's most noble creed.
Sweet Charity! how dear her face,
Celestial, of undying grace.

Sweet Charity! she comes to help
And save the weak and erring one,—
She speaks but words of kindness, cheer,
Whatever mortal may have done!
She seeks to be forgiving, mild,
And put herself in other's place.
Instead of ruining another
She fain would rescue from disgrace.
Sweet Charity! she comes to bind
All hearts in one, unite Mankind.

Sweet Charity! an angel from Heaven

She comes to help and cheer and bless;
Wherever sorrow is, or want or need,
Wherever sickness or distress,
'Tis there we see her ministry
And hear her tender, kindly voice;
'Tis there we see her magic pow'r
To make the sorrowing rejoice!
Sweet Charity! oh, with us dwell,
Your lesson may we learn it well.

JUSTICE

HEN I appear at Peter's gate
And ask to be let in,
And wait to hear him tell my fate
Too conscious of my sin,
There's just one thing that I'll request,
Just one most simple favor,—
No, not to dwell with Heaven's Blest
Despite my earth behavior;
But simply this, that as a man
I may be judged, may pay the price;
I don't know much of God's great plan,
But this I will ask—Justice!

THE FLAG

IS the flag that men have fought for,
'Tis the flag that men have died for,
The flag we love, the Red, the White,
the Blue!
'Tis the flag of crimson bars,
Brilliant galaxy of stars,
Whose colors never earth or Heaven knew!
'Tis the flag of richest red,
Stained by blood of those who bled
On battlefields and filled the hero's grave.
'Tis the flag of true men all,
'Tis the flag whose instant call
We'll heed, and give ourselves as others gave!

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